

THE ESTHETE.

Oscar Wilde's Appearance in Brooklyn.

His Lecture on "The English Renaissance" at the Academy—A Crowded and Fashionable Audience—Few Interruptions and Abundant Applause—The Poet's Bearing and Address—His Impressions of the United States and Intentions for the Future—He Hopes to be in California "When the Flowers Come Up."

The big glaring yellow posters that from fences and dead walls have for a week announced the coming of Oscar Wilde, proved effectual. The photographs of the noted aesthete, exhibited at every advantageous point, were not without avail. More people by one-third than could gain admission thronged to the Academy of Music last evening to hear Mr. Wilde's lecture on the "English Renaissance." It was apparent, from a glance at the early arrivals, that the audience would be large and fashionable. Consequently, Mr. Wilde's managers smiled like so many panes as they listened to the clinking of the flowing coin in the box office, and congratulated themselves that they would still have a handsome profit after paying the lecturer the \$1,000 agreed upon. That the poet can forget the pathetic long enough to at the proper time observe matters with the vision of ordinary mortals was apparent when he succeeded in having the \$1,000 due him comfortably tucked away in his fob before he ventured upon the boards.

WAITING FOR THE ESTHETE.

Preliminary notice was given that the lecture would begin at 8:15 o'clock. By 8 every seat in the auditorium was occupied, and around the balcony circle fringe of humanity spread itself in increasing density. The lobby was choked with fresh arrivals; there was much crowding and hurrying and a long line of young men, with their leader at the box office and followers extending well out beyond the curb, shivered in the crisp night air, and wondered why the ticket seller was not more expeditious. Within the parquet and the rising semi circle of the balcony and up in the dress circle were visible many lovely women, who, in costume, had little of the strikingly esthetic about them, but who were, with their luminous eyes, glowing cheeks and mobile features quite as attractive, perhaps, as if they had undertaken to emulate the unforgotten "rapturous maidens." From a distance the vast array of Gainsborough hats worn by these representatives of the fair sex, gave the impression that the house was filled with blooming flowers of prodigious size and indefinable variety. The audience waited patiently up to the hour fixed for the lecture. There were many curious smiles and some sly tittering by the more unrefined as, in the interval before the lecture the auditors looked up the personalities and studied the peculiarities of their neighbors. Not more than a dozen sunflowers were to be seen in the audience; nowhere was a pond lily visible, and the only two young men in evening dress explained that they had called at the Academy on their way to a private reception. The absence of floral tokens was compensated for, however, by the attendance of a number of esthetic local celebrities. Three of the boxes were occupied. In one were Judge McCue, of the City Court, Major A. G. Constable and Henry D. Polhemus. Opposite them a dozen or more members of the Madison Club, the guests of their president, James W. Ridgway, impatiently awaited the appearance of Mr. Wilde. They included in their company such esthetes as Louis Graef, James McDermott, R. B. Greenwood, Jr., F. H. White, J. C. Hendrix and Gustav Spiegel. Other esthetes were visible in the parquet, including Sam. McLean, Jeremiah F. Robinson, District Attorney Catlin, William Hart, Leonard Moody, Joan F. Nichols, W. E. S. Fales, Henry DeGrupe, A. Dinkie Wheeler, Anthony Barrett, Thomas Watson, Felix Campbell, J. Augustus Brodie, Chief of Police Campbell, George D. Bayard, J. M. Shaughan, Alex. Forman, Thomas M. Rodman, ex-Judge Troy and Theophilus Olena. Colonel Samuel D. Richards and Colonel E. L. Langford, the esthetes of the Police Department, lingered fondly upon the outskirts of the audience, evidently in the fear that they might be mistaken for the lecturer.

MR. WILDE'S APPEARANCE.

It was nearly half past 8 o'clock when the lecturer appeared. The audience had manifested some impatience and applauded vigorously in order to bring him out. The appearance of an ancient attache of the Academy bearing a glass of water to Mr. Wilde's reading desk provoked applause and laughter because a few unesthetic persons mistook him for the poet. When the poet entered he cast a critical glance at the arrangement of the stage, and then seemed satisfied. He had, apparently, stepped from a rose garden into a drawing room. The stage was carpeted in red and green of disagreeable figure. The walls were of pink, relieved with preposterous Cupids indulging in impossible feats of agility and marksmanship. Lace curtains, fastened with cherry ribbon, were looped over the doorway. A reading desk covered with scarlet plush faced the footlights. A Japanese screen, gleaming with golden butterflies on a black ground, flanked the reading desk. From an antique brocade pilaster placed upon an ebony table, a sunflower of unhealthy appearance rose above a collection of obelisks and grasses. An easel, upholding a plaque, relieved with a wreath of arbutus drooped across it, was conspicuous amid the black wall and furniture. It was an entirely esthetic stage setting, even to the buffalo horn supports of the lecturer's essay chair.

All eyes were quickly fixed upon the poet in critical survey. Exaggerated ideas of Oscar Wilde, the outgrowth, doubtless, of Bunthorne's peculiar personality, were quickly swept away. The audience saw before them a tall, rather awkward young man, of somewhat remarkable, but not disagreeable appearance. The poet wore a dress coat, a low cut vest of white duck, a turn down collar, a huge necktie of white satin knotted beneath his chin, knee breeches of black cloth, and light pumps with ties of black ribbon. A curious stud of two large pearls in a silver setting shone upon his shirt front; a seal ring of plain design was on his finger, and a gold fob chain completed his outfit of jewelry. His dark brown hair fell in a ripple nearly to his shoulders, giving to his face an aspect that was only saved from effeminacy by the massive squareness of the jaw and the heavy masculine lines of the nose and lips. The "ah!" of satisfaction that greeted the upturning of the gas was followed with a rattle of plaudits, as Mr. Wilde cast his manuscript upon the reading desk and immediately proceeded with his lecture. He read in a dull monotone, failing of emphasis, neglectful of his periods and drawing altogether as if he had been down the road or somewhere else and caught a bad cold; His earlier utterances were received with careful attention; and, indeed, the greater part of the audience were attentive throughout. The only interruptions came from the outward fringes of balcony and dress circle and they were infrequent, in the shape of unnecessary applause, and received timely reproof in the hissing of those who came to listen and not to interrupt. Mr. Wilde was obviously pleased with his audience and drewled on to the close with apparent satisfaction, turning, as he withdrew to bestow a farewell bow upon the audience.

The substance of the lecture will be found below:

THE LECTURE.

In beginning his lecture, Mr. Wilde said it was not his intention to attempt any abstract definition of beauty, any universal formula or to communicate that "which in its essence is incommunicable, the virtue by which a particular picture or poem affects us with a unique or special joy," but rather to point out the general ideas which characterize the great English renaissance of art in this century, to discover their source and estimate their future as far as possible. He called it the English Renaissance, for it was like the great Italian one in "its desire to produce a type of general culture, its desire for a more graceful and comely way of life, its passion for physical beauty, its exclusive attention to form, its seeking for new subjects for poetry, new forms of art, new intellectual and imaginative enjoyments, and "our romantic movement, because it is our most recent expression of beauty." It was not a mere revival of Greek thought or medieval feeling, but the result of a union of Hellenism with the romantic spirit, "as from the marriage of Faust and Helen of Troy sprang the beautiful boy Euphorion." The French Revolution was the first condition of its birth—that great revolution of which we are all the children—whose prelude was first sounded in literature, whose scientific tendency the artistic renaissance had bent to its own service, not merely in its adding to enthusiasm that intellectual basis which is its strength, or that influence of which Wordsworth was thinking when he said that poetry was merely the impassioned expression on the face of science, the great comical emotion and deep pantheism of alchemy "to which Shelley has given the first and Swinburne its latest glory of song," but rather its influence on the artistic spirit "in preserving that close observation and sense of limitation as well as of clearness of vision, which are the characteristics of the real artist"—of all great works of poetry. "And soon," said the lecturer, "that desire for perfection which lay at the base of the revolution found in a young English poet its most complete and flawless realization."

AS HOMER FORESHADOWED GREEK ART.

Dante the passion and color of Italian painting, Ronsard the modern love of landscape, so in Keats is discovered the beginning of the English renaissance; for while Byron was a rebel and Shelley a dreamer, Keats the pure and serene artist, was the forerunner of the pre-Raphaelite school and of the great romantic movement. After stating that the greatest of the British public thought that aesthetics was either French for affectation or German for a dodo, and that the young pre-Raphaelites were a lot of young eccentrics, who thought a sort of divine crookedness and holy awkwardness in drawing the chief object of art, and that to know nothing about their great men was one of the necessary elements of English education; Mr. Wilde sketched briefly the story of the formation, aims and opposition to the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. Of the later secessions to its ranks, Burne-Jones substituted for the simpler realism of the early days a more exquisite choice, rather Florentine than Venetian, and William Morris as a poet in his perfect pronunciation and clearness of word and vision was unexcelled in English literature, and as a decorator had given to the romantic movement the social idea and social factor. The revolution accomplished by the clique of young men was not of ideas alone but of execution, not one of conceptions but of creations. The great era of art history in sculpture, painting, literature and music were eras of new technical improvements primarily, so the romantic movement was a reaction against the empty conventional workmanship, the lax execution of the previous poetry and painting. The influence of the artistic spirit on poetry and the fascination in all times of the study of the conditions of poetic production, as in the interest shown in the young French poets of the romantic movement, in Poe's analysis of the workings of his imagination in the creation of "The Raven," were spoken of, as well as the intrusion in the last century of the intellectual and didactic element into the poetic kingdom; the fact that the absolute distinction of the artist is not so much in his capacity to feel as to interpret nature, and the workings of the artistic spirit in the choice of subject.

THE ARTIST PAST AND FUTURE.

To the artist the present will not be a white more real than the past. He will take from both what is salutary for his own spirit, "with the artistic control of one who is in the possession of the secret of beauty." All things were not fit subjects for poetry—nothing that is harsh or disturbing; nothing that is debatable or about which men argue. "Calm and perfect repose were incarnate in Keats' 'Ode to the Grecian Urn,' and the one dominant note in Morris' 'Earthly Paradise' and in Burne-Jones' knights and ladies." "The poet all times and places are one. There is but one time—the artistic moment; one law—the law of form; one land—the land of beauty—"a land removed, indeed, from the real world, and yet more sensuous because more enduring; calm, yet with that calm which dwells in the faces of Greek statues." The wild-eyed style and mighty limbed prophets in the Sistine Chapel tell more of the real spirit of the Italian renaissance, of the dream of Savonarola and the prime of Borgia, than the bawling bores and cooking women of Dutch art teach of the real spirit of the history of Holland. "I remember once in talking with Mr. Burne-Jones about modern science," said the lecturer, "his saying to me 'the more materialistic science becomes the more angels I shall paint; their wings are my protest in favor of the immortality of the soul.'" Mr. Wilde instanced as "joy in art that swift and wonderful pageant of horses and riders" in Rubens' masterpiece at Brussels. The restless modern intellectual spirit was the cause of "the real serious element of influence of the arts being hidden from many. Eastern and Japanese art, untroubled by intellectual doubts, were true to primary

and pictorial conditions, therefore their influence and fascination. The pictorial charm in painting was the channel to the soul; as in poetry, the joy does not come from the subject, but from what Keats called the sensual charm of verse. Health in art was the artist's recognition of the limitations, of material, individually in the production of the same artistic delight, like that given by music, where form and matter are one and which most completely realizes the artistic ideal. In speaking of criticism Mr. Wilde thought that the first duty of the ordinary art critic was to hold his tongue at all times and in all places. Artists, like the Greek gods, were only revealed to one another. The true critic addresses the public, not the artist. He should create for art the social aim; teach the people how to approach all artistic work, the love they are to bear it and the lesson they are to draw from it.

THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE INCOMPLETE.

The great English Renaissance was not complete, for there can be no great sculpture without a beautiful national life, and no great drama without a noble national life, and the commercial spirit of England had killed both. The novel had not killed the play, but the drama, the meeting place of art and life, is impossible without a noble public and belongs to ages like those of Elizabeth and Pericles. It was rather to us that they would turn to complete this great movement; there was something Hellenic in our air and world, something that had a quicker breath of the joy and power of Elizabeth's England than their ancient civilization could give. Our youth and also our absence of tradition may be an element of strength. Speaking in literature with a voice like that of nature, we may create that literature which Goethe said he foresaw, which all people might claim as theirs, as all have contributed to its foundation. The value of the decorative arts in preparing the mind for the revelation of the truths of art by the study of beautiful things was insisted upon. English children would in time grow up like those of Plato's city "in a simple atmosphere of all fair things." Every object should be beautiful, give joy to its maker as well as its user and lighten the burden of the toilers. For those, the lecturer said, with whom the end of life is not action but thought, "who must burn always with one of the passions of this little, fiery colored world, and to whom, valuing passion for its intensity and not for its permanence, over and over again in the progress of their culture find what was once precious has become indifferent—for those who find life interesting not for its secrets but for its situations, for its pulsations and not for its purpose, the passion for beauty engendered by the decorative arts will be more satisfying than any political or religious enthusiasm, any enthusiasm for humanity, any ecstasy or sorrow of love, for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest qualities to your moments as they pass."

Mr. Wilde made an excellent impression by telling the story of John Ruskin leading out from Oxford a number of students who were willing to follow him in the act as well as in the desire of making things beautiful and useful. The lecturer was one of that group. They broke stones, dug the ground, drove wheelbarrows and did many things beside to which their hands were unaccustomed, and they built a road which put two villages in communication. There were not wanting those who sneered and scorned, but they, the disciples of Ruskin, did not care much for that then, and they didn't care at all for the same thing now. This was received with prolonged applause. The lecture throughout was substantially the same as that delivered elsewhere.

MR. WILDE'S IMPRESSIONS.

Mr. Wilde sat, unattended upon a small, marble table in the cold, cheerless green room of the Academy after the lecture, when an *Eagle* reporter entered. He shook hands pleasantly and without affectation. He expressed satisfaction with the result of his lecture in Brooklyn and his experiences in this country. "The men and women of America," he said, "are splendid; but there is a broad chasm between them and the newspapers. The people are delightful—the newspapers simply intolerable. Not all, however. I have but one complaint to make, and that is against a Baltimore paper. It contained a villainous attack upon me. I expect to go West, if there is anything left of me after I finish lecturing in the East, and I hope to be in California when the flowers come up. I feel that lecturing is pleasant, although it requires deep study and careful application. In England, you know, we write instead of lecture. I can hardly endure railroad traveling. The railroads in this country are superior to those in England. Still, there is not much to choose between them. One is intolerable and the other unbearable." Mr. Wilde, as he finished speaking, languidly drew on his long, pea green, fur lined overcoat, and entered his coupe.

TALMAGE'S TALK.

The Persecution of the Jews in Russia. Reflections Upon the New York Fire. The Late Dr. Bellows.

Dr. Talmage lectured on secular events last evening before a large audience at the Tabernacle. In the course of his remarks he said:

Christ a Jew and Mary a Jewess, civilization and Christianity cannot be stolid spectators of the outrages inflicted upon the Jews in Russia. Their homes destroyed, whole villages depopulated, vast estates ruined, families without number slaughtered in cold-blooded butchery, simply because they are Jews. Well may the whole world shudder at the horror, and demand that the mobs be scattered and the outrages stopped. The reason that Russia did not immediately arrest this persecution was because she did not want to arrest it. The meanest government on earth is the Russian government. Forth and back between that government and our own compliments come and go. We are all the time hearing of the friendly feeling between Russia and America. It is no credit to us that as a nation we are friendly. No Christian nation can afford to be on endearing terms with that monster of cruelty. While we are holding indignation meetings about the treatment of the Jews, in every church and hall of Christendom there ought to be indignation meetings against the Siberian cruelties inflicted upon Russian subjects under slightest suspicion and without anything worthy the name of trial. This infamy against the Jews is only another note in the long dirge of murdered thousands. It is time that the United States Government stops shaking hands so heartily with Russia until these hands wash off the blood not only of Jews but of Gentiles—the blood of martyrs innumerable and perpetual. It may be well for the Rev. Dr. Adler in London to ask the contribution of a million pounds to transport the persecuted Jews of Russia to the United States; but the Jews must be protected in their homes. They have as much God given right to dwell in Russia as the Czar. You might as well outrage the Jews in America, and then take up a collection to send them to England or Australia. They must have a right to life, liberty, property and their own religion in New York and Brooklyn and London and Paris and Warsaw and Moscow and St. Petersburg. The same God who scattered them in all nations intends to have them protected under every flag and in every home. The right to impose upon people of one style of feature and complexion implies the right to impose upon people of any feature or complexion. The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joshua and Ruth and Esther is the God of the Jew as well as of the Gentile. I am the bitter foe of assassination, but let the Czar of Russia know that until he can build his throne on righteousness for all the people, it will be a throne on the top of volcanic disturbance. The voice of civilization and Christianity is being heard to-night louder than ever before in the Winter palaces of all the Russias. What the Jews in Warsaw want is not so much free passage to America as liberty to stay unmolested where they are. There must be no place on the round earth where a man shall be hindered or pushed or wounded if he behave himself well, and that nation who resists this decree of justice will go down under the anathema of the world and the anathema of the Lord God Almighty. It is not, as some think, merely an American doctrine that all men are free and independent or ought to be. Robert Burns wrote for all nations the declaration of independence in that verse the last line of which is "A man's a man for a' that."

THE FIRE.

In our country during this last week, the fire bells have been rung fiercely. Last Tuesday, New York saw another tragedy of flame. The scene was exciting, not only because of those who perished, but of the narrow escape of those who were saved. Think of the most eminent religious editor on a window ledge, at 70 years of age, walking across from building to building. Think of the poor girls eating a livelihood, not only for themselves but for their parents, dropping out of life in an instant, and the households that wait in vain for their return. I know it is often said that sorrow is the same, whether it comes to the palace or to the cot, to the rich or to the poor, but I deny it. Sorrow is worse when it comes to the poor. You who live in splendid residences and have all comfortable surroundings have many sympathizers when sorrow comes and a thousand alleviations. Not so in the abode of the poor. Our deepest sympathies are stirred at the awful ruin of property and human life! As in all other conflagrations, this of last Tuesday had its heroes, conspicuous among them a bootblack who fought so bravely for the lives of those in the upper stories of the burning building that all the earth has read in admiration of his deed. Give that boy a fair chance and he will honor with his courage and genius the highest places of worldly eminence. Huzza for the bootblack! There are boys just like him waiting for opportunity to climb, and I rejoice that in no country on earth are these facilities greater than here and now for all those who want to climb. They are the best heroes who save life, not those who destroy it. Both cities and all the land during the week mourns the death of Rev. Dr. Bellows, of New York. His theology was different from ours in some respects, but he loved the same Christ and was practically interested in all the great philanthropies of the day. He lived a gospel of mercy and purity and usefulness and wide sympathy. In that long agony, when the war hospitals were crowded with sick and wounded and dying men, Dr. Bellows had voice and pen and heart and fortune enlisted for the alleviation of suffering. I was down on the field as chaplain a little while, and a little while again looking after the sick, and I noticed that the Sanitary Commission, of which Dr. Bellows was the presiding spirit, was busy with ambulance and cordials and nurses and medicines and all needs to supply. The story of that Sanitary Commission is written only in one place—in Heaven. Many a dying soldier through the agency of that institution had his last hours comforted, and through it many a farewell message was sent to father, or mother, or wife, or child. It is well that once in a while we have opportunity of reviving the memory of kindnesses performed by the sick couch and the grave trench, and the achievements surgical and humanitarian and balsamic and christian. We make presidents and governors and cabinet officers and postmasters of the soldiers who stood in the field, but the civilians who, like Dr. Bellows, brought physical relief to the prostrate and the amputated, and the ragged and the power blasted, do not so often receive appropriate recognition.

ST. STEPHEN'S SOCIAL RECEPTION.

The concert and reception given by the St. Stephen's Social and Literary Union at Ridgewood Hall, Thursday night, was in every respect a gratifying success, affording a great deal of pleasure to a large audience. The vocal portion of the programme was most excellently rendered, especially the overture from "Zampa," piano and violin, by Mr. and Miss Freeman. The choruses, "Away, Away, the Morning Freshly Breaking" and "Threatening Death to Traitor Slave" were appreciated. The duet "Beautiful Moonlight" by the Misses Clara and Gussie Leader, and "Come with the Gipsy Bride," by a quartet of the Misses Leader and Messrs. Waterbury and Crane, and the tenor solos of F. Harry Day, "The Anchor's Weighed," and "Over the Hills" elicited deserved applause. The piano solos of Miss Estelle Crane added materially to the evening's entertainment. The comedy of "Witches in the Green" was acted with spirit and vim by the Misses Flora Stephenson, Lizzie Field and Sarah Heatley and Messrs. W. C. Dodge, G. F. Corly and G. James. The readings of Mr. Anderson were excellent, and suited the humor of the audience. The replications of Miss Jennie and Master Charles Sinclair were well spoken. Augustus Proverbally's recitations of "Mad Lucre" and Adelaide Proverbally's "Legend of Bregeux" were received with marked favor by the audience. A reception followed, which was enjoyed with great zest by all. The officers were: Rev. Dr. T. F. Cornell, ex-officio president; Mr. Crane, first vice president; Miss E. L. Stephenson, second vice president; R. Chapman, secretary; W. C. Dodge, treasurer; Frederick Bartman, musical director.

IN REPLY TO COLONEL INGERSOLL.

Rev. Thomas Mitchell, author of a recently published work, entitled "Cosmogony," will deliver the first of a course of lectures to-morrow evening at Stalls Hall, Bedford avenue, near Myrtle, to be continued each Sunday evening, in which he proposes to expose what he terms Ingersoll's ignorance and perversion both of Scripture, science and philosophy, contained in his answer to Dr. Talmage. The first lecture will be to show that the Scripture statements of creation are true science and philosophy, taking King James' version without note or comment or even a marginal reference. He feels confident of being able to make Ingersoll's easy triumph over Dr. Talmage of short duration to the mind of every one who hears him. At the close of the lecture liberty will be given for any one in the audience to make objections to the conclusions reached, which the lecturer pledges himself to answer on the spot.

"American Nihilists" is the title of a new lecture, to be delivered by Mr. B. E. Sherrill before the spread the Light Club to-morrow evening at No. 555 Fulton street.